

Guernsey. (H. N.)

ANNUAL ADDRESS

TO THE

Homœopathic Medical Society

OF PENNSYLVANIA,

BY THE PRESIDENT,

HENRY N. GUERNSEY, M. D.



ANNUAL ADDRESS

TO THE

HOMŒOPATHIC MEDICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA,

BY THE PRESIDENT,

H. N. GUERNSEY, M. D.

MEMBERS OF THE HOMŒOPATHIC MEDICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA:

At our last Annual meeting, held in Philadelphia, October 3d and 4th, 1877, you saw fit to confer upon me the honor of election as your President, for the year 1878. For this token of respect and esteem as a member of our Society, and for the expression of your sentiment to me as a man and member of the Homœopathic Medical profession, I heartily thank you. As an earnest of my sincere desire to serve and to honor you and the profession which we represent, in the faithful discharge of the responsible duties laid upon me, let my actions as your presiding officer determine. To address you at this time and in this manner is, I know, a departure from time-honored custom; but to my mind it is a more useful plan than to defer it until the opening of the session. If the President has any communication worthy the attention of the Convention over which he is to preside, there will, by this plan, be ample time for its consideration and judicious disposition. We meet together for the transaction of such annual business as the growth of our progressive science demands and for the interchange of such opinions and ex-



periences as naturally accompany our advancement. The time allowed for these proceedings is too limited and too valuable to be consumed by lengthy presidential harangues which, though they be never so suggestive and useful in themselves, are nearly lost sight of in the pressure of business which has accumulated during the year, and which must be ably despatched. Therefore when our Society convenes in *Pittsburgh* in September, 1878, we shall proceed to business at once, the President endeavoring in every way to save as much time for the reading and consideration of your valuable papers as possible. In all discussions it will be his aim to bring out as complete an expression of opinion as it may be the pleasure of the Convention to receive, and to secure the fullest liberty and protection to every member occupying the floor.

The President would earnestly recommend as follows: That all reports of Societies, Colleges, Dispensaries, Clubs, etc., needing no special discussion or action of the Convention, be read merely by title and referred for publication, when we can all read and profit by them. Measures should be taken to secure the publication of the proceedings of each convention at as early a day as possible after adjournment, say in two months at farthest.

Further, that two additional bureaus be formed, which should be: a bureau on "Medical Thermometry," whose duty it shall be to determine, as nearly as possible, the use of the thermometer in our school as a guide in the treatment of disease, and to report the same at each annual meeting of the Society.

Also, a bureau on some vital principle in the law of cure, whose duty it shall be to discuss, elucidate, and present the same to the annual meetings of the Society.

The President respectfully asks the co-operation of every member of the profession in the State of Pennsylvania in rendering our next meeting as useful and interesting as possible. The old Keystone State of these United

States has won many laurels for, and in, the Union in war, in peace, in the arts and sciences, in literature, in religion and in Medicine. In all the above she has been the great Fountain-head of this Western Hemisphere. It is a matter of congratulation for us that this especially is true of Homœopathic Medicine. From what I can learn there are as many, if not more, readers of Samuel Hahnemann's *Organon of the Healing art* in this State as in any other; readers eager to imbibe its truths with the determination to practice thereby. The last meeting, held in Philadelphia, October, 1877, was one of the best in the annals of this Society, in every respect, and bore full evidence of the foregoing statement.

Nearly all of the numerous papers presented, were such as Hahnemann himself would have taken delight in hearing. The days of alternation of remedies are passing away, as also are other deviations from the standard of truth according to the expoundings in Hahnemann's *Organon*, the *greatest of text-books*, to the highest advantage of our great Commonwealth. Let us do still better at the next meeting, for the honor of our State and for the wider promulgation of Homœopathy. What we do to benefit ourselves will redound to the good of the community at large. We can further the healthfulness and prosperity of our fellow-creatures only by improving ourselves in medicine and as Christian gentlemen. With these ends in view, let us take pains to prepare papers that shall have the clear ring of pure and unalloyed truth in them, teeming with useful points and sterling value. Let us avoid spun-out theories and notions that cannot be made practical and that will not stand that fiery ordeal—the *test of experience*. We need a large number of reported cases illustrating the great law of cure in a clear, terse, and incontrovertible manner, showing in their authors the nicely-formed habits of thought that lead to true science. We had some of such a character, admirably reported, at our last meeting, particularly from the ranks of the younger members of the profession. It was truly refreshing and instructive to listen

to their harmonious chime. It is quite unnecessary to make the statement that the Society will lose nothing, if cases where the treatment has been so badly mixed up that the patient's recovery has apparently occurred in spite of the doctor, and no clear and intelligent idea can be formed as to what effected the cure, be not recorded at all. *Such reports waste valuable time.*

If we take a retrospective view of the medical world for the past half century, we shall see that a wonderful change has everywhere taken place in the practice of medicine. As an illustration, in Philadelphia, at that time, the signs of cuppers, leechers and bleeders were seen conspicuously posted very generally in every street. So heroic was the medical treatment of those days, that it was said of the above city, "her streets run with human blood, and blue pills are taken by the ton." But even then, in the near horizon, the welcome light of the day of better things began to shine. Dr. C. Hering, with a few other *real healers* came to the relief of the tortured multitudes. More and more have been added to that little band, enrolled under the banner of *similia similibus curantur*, and so well have they fought the good fight that now where do we find the above signs? Echo answers, "Where?" A corresponding change has taken place in every other form of heroism and terrorism in the fair land of this Commonwealth. Yea, throughout the world—thanks be to our Heavenly Father who sent his servant, Samuel Hahnemann and his faithful and trusty followers. Now the better educated and more progressive members of the Allopathic School are investigating Therapeutics upon the same plan as did Hahnemann; and they will never be found wallowing in the mire of Eclecticism. I think it evident in regard to all the sciences everywhere, that there is a corresponding improvement—quality, not quantity, being the demand; so also of all the arts; in husbandry and in daily labors even.

The Homœopathic profession in our State has abundant

reason to be congratulated in this respect. The general tendency is not only to revere Hahnemann, but also to *emulate* him; not as a man, but because of his principles, which are found to be more and more reliable in proportion as we study and apply them; and by which we are learning every day that it is quality, not quantity, that does the work of healing the sick, restoring the blind to sight, making the lame to walk, causing the deaf to hear, and doing all other works of redeeming the mental and physical man from his fallen condition of health. Yes, it is by reading and applying his directions that we are able to do this more and more successfully, with more and more certainty as we understand and obey his teachings. By *studying* the Organon its principles gain and grow upon us, and our faculties develop, increase and expand into a clear comprehension of it. "The observation of this fact, by experience, led our Bönninghausen to inculcate upon the profession his advice to iterate and reiterate the diligent perusal and assiduous study of this work as the fountain-head of our knowledge of Homœopathy." In reading and pondering over the writings of our great preceptor with a view of applying them to practice, some of us can understand and apply them more easily than others, and can carry forward the work quite satisfactorily; others stumble more or less from the want of a clear perception how to proceed, and feel very timid and doubtful of the efficiency of the small doses and the single remedy; others again make very bungling work of it, and call their practice homœopathic, when it scarcely bears a resemblance to that mighty and all-powerful system of healing the sick. We all need to study Hahnemann's writings more and more closely, and the stronger should instruct and lead the weaker. Now, as our conventions are, *and pre-eminently should be*, educational in character, it seems to me that some educational standard should be recognized, something that we can "square by," and that it should be one of the first duties of our Convention individually and collectively, to strive to elevate ourselves to that standard.

If we think there is a principle in Hahnemann's writings that will stand the test of the closest possible investigation scientifically and practically, why should not the matter come squarely before us, and be dispassionately discussed and practically elucidated? Let it come pointedly and clearly, that we may see if there is the perfection that some of us claim.

What we want in our school is precision and certainty, and we desire to approach this elevated, this grand and noble standard all the days of our lives for the sake of our wives, our children, and coming posterity. We desire to preserve their health, to mitigate their sufferings, to see them well and enjoying the full fruition that sane minds and sound bodies vouchsafe to them. Then we may be happy. Are the principles of Samuel Hahnemann calculated to lead us onward and upward to this high goal? Let this be fully determined at our approaching State Convention. If there be a negative response, then are there any principles in existence that will conduce to such an end? If so, let them be presented, discussed, and if found worthy, adopted. Let us have the best we can find, and when found, appropriated. Let us not be afraid to examine into their fullest significance and practicability, and measure all our proceedings thereby, individually and collectively. I already hear the decision loudly proclaimed by the united voices of the Convention, "*Similia similibus curantur*" is our motto, and the principles as unfolded and explained in Hahnemann's Organon and in his Chronic Diseases, are our guide in the practice of our profession. We are satisfied that men's medical opinions are valueless without the basis of true principle." This being the case, we must define our motto. What does "*similia similibus curantur*" mean, what does it imply, and do we fulfil its requirements in our practice? Are we really in the endeavor to form those habits of nice observation, without which no progress in science is ever made?

Having thoroughly and deliberately settled these questions, there are others growing out of the principles

of our science upon which we all want more light, that we may become stronger and truer to ourselves as medical practitioners, truer to our patients as more successful healers, truer to our Commonwealth in the abatement and prevention of disease. How often do we hear the statement made, "Away with your *science*, it is my duty to cure my patient in the best manner I know how." What is science but knowledge—knowledge so perfected as to become science? And did this kind of knowledge ever stand in the way of making the best of cures in the most sure, speedy and perfect manner? He who questions this fact, cannot long stand in the way of blazing light and advancement. He who casts loose from Homœopathic principles in prescribing for the sick, and bangs away at his patient at random, and teaches others to do so, will soon enough come to grief and to judgment.

As before remarked, these conventions should become pre-eminently educational; they should decide all important questions in medicine in this State; they should guard our medical schools and give general directions as to what to teach and what not to teach, because the best and nearly all the talent in our Commonwealth is brought together into one solid phalanx at our Annual meetings. And here, as at the capital of the nation, all the great questions of vital interest should be determined in a dispassionate, truthful manner, and all in accord with science. Then every member of the profession, feeling strong in his mission, will move forward in the discharge of his duty upon the basis of true principles. Then will the old Keystone State be an honor to itself, and a key-note to all the other States and to the world. When the master minds—the thinking, the acting, and the progressive minds—of the profession in our Society fraternize for the good of Homœopathy, there will be progress indeed, and no differences of opinion on all-important matters will exist. We shall have strength, and we shall be a power in the land; then we will be quoted as authority: "The Pennsylvania State Society

says thus and thus"—we shall be a Shibboleth in the land, yea, and to other lands also.

Gentlemen, we have ground-work and basis broad enough and deep enough upon which to rear one of the finest structures, a medical temple the like of which the world has never seen. We can do it. Shall we do it?

